



TOWN OF ARLINGTON DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Grant Uses and Community Impact Report

Community Development Block Grant
CARES Act (CDBG-CV) Funds

April 2022



Introduction

At the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in early 2020, numerous closures, restrictions, and advisories were put in place locally, statewide, and federally in order to mitigate risk of transmission of the Covid-19 virus. At the same time that public health was at risk, workers experienced furloughs, layoffs, and decreased hours, resulting in increased housing instability, food insecurity, and loss of livelihood. Families, seniors, and children experienced gaps in schooling and childcare, and many faced social isolation. Owners and employees of small businesses witnessed declines in revenue as restrictions limited the ability to operate businesses at capacity, and many closed their doors altogether. These health and economic hardships continue to disparately impact women and members of the Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities.

These nationwide trends were prevalent in Arlington, where a number of underserved needs came to light, exposing gaps in meeting critical needs in the areas of individual and collective health, social services, housing, small business viability, and employment. The Town of Arlington worked rapidly to mitigate the harms of these challenges. Grant funds were allocated to organizations and town departments well-positioned to address these challenges to support town-wide efforts to address the harms of Covid-19.

CARES Act

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act was signed into law on March 27, 2020. The CARES Act implemented a variety of programs to address issues related to the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, providing fast and direct economic assistance for American workers, families, small businesses, and industries. Among these appropriations, Congress designated funds to be administered by HUD through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program. These CDBG funds received through the CARES Act are known as “CDBG-CV.” Their use is restricted to activities that prevent, prepare for, and respond to the pandemic and principally serve residents earning low and moderate incomes.

In 2020, the Town of Arlington received two Congressional appropriations from the CARES Act totaling \$980,388. The first appropriation, received in May of 2020, was \$659,903. The second allocation, received in September 2020, totaled \$380,388. To date, all but one program has ended. The Arlington Public Schools Tutoring Program, which aligns with the academic year, will conclude in June 2022. In addition to CDBG-CV funds, Arlington reallocated \$58,165.49 in regular CDBG funds to activities addressing the pandemic. This report provides an overview of the planning and implementation process for each program funded by CDBG-CV, in addition to the community impacts resulting from the use of these funds.

Outreach

The Department of Planning and Community Development carried out comprehensive outreach measures to notify the public and interested parties of the availability of funding in accordance with the CDBG Citizen Participation Plan, utilizing special waivers made available by HUD where applicable to efficiently allocate funding to those with the highest needs.

Rental Assistance Program

Discussions with area providers of affordable housing, input from residents, and regional trends prompted the development of a direct assistance program facilitated by the Department of Planning and Community Development, with input and collaboration from the Community Preservation Act Committee, Arlington Department of Health and Human Services, and the Housing Corporation of Arlington.

Public Service Programs

Calls for applications were published in June and September 2020 to notify Arlington public service agencies of the availability of funds to agencies providing basic needs, other than housing, including other household expenses, food

security, mental health counseling, child care, transportation, senior support, and technology support. Existing CDBG Subrecipients were also notified of the funding opportunity.

Economic Development Programs

Coordination with the Arlington Economic Development Recovery Task Force indicated that the greatest need for small business owners was assistance with paying bills. Subsequent surveys of the business community confirmed ongoing needs for assistance with rent, utilities, payroll, and other operational expenses, in addition to technical assistance for businesses seeking to transition services or offerings to alternate formats.

CDBG-CV Activity Budget & Community Impact Summary

CDBG-CV Line Item	CDBG-CV Budget	Community Impacts
Rental Assistance Programs		
Arlington Emergency Tenant Assistance Program	\$407,928.50	81 households received a total of 281 months of rental assistance
Public Service Programs		
Council on Aging Technology Lending Library	\$15,438.90	64 individuals borrowed Chromebooks for communication purposes and to partake in virtual COA activities.
Arlington EATS Covid-19 Support	\$10,000.00	1,707 individuals had enhanced food security
Food Link Covid-19 Support	\$21,400.00	5,974 individuals had enhanced food security
Arlington Boys and Girls Club Covid-19 Support	\$5,000.00	73 individuals participated in low- or no-cost programming
Health and Human Services Covid-19 Testing Site	\$10,015.00	73 individuals received Covid-19 tests
Arlington Public Schools Tutoring Program *Ongoing	\$115,080.04	122 individuals received no-cost tutoring support
Economic Development Programs		
Arlington Small Business Covid-19 Relief Program (Microenterprise Program)	\$200,000.00*	25 businesses received grants *supplemented with additional \$49,436.07 of regular CDBG funds
Arlington Small Business Covid-19 Relief Program	\$195,516.56*	21 businesses received grants; 21 full-time-equivalent jobs created or retained. *supplemented with additional \$8,729.42 of regular CDBG funds
Total CDBG-CV funds	\$980,388.00	
Total regular CDBG funds	\$58,165.49	
Total CDBG Covid-19 relief investments	\$1,038,553.49	

CDBG-CV Program Descriptions

Arlington Emergency Tenant Assistance Program

A significant portion of Arlington's overall CDBG-CV allocation was programmed to the Arlington Emergency Tenant Assistance Program, which was open to residents who earned a low income (at or below 50% of the area median income) and who had a negative financial impact caused by Covid-19. This program was established and administered by the Town and a contracted housing administrator. It was funded collaboratively with CDBG and Community Preservation Act funding. Across both funding sources, \$658,272.03 was provided in direct rental assistance in four rounds from May 2020 – February 2022. Overall, 81 households received assistance through CDBG-CV support, with an average monthly assistance amount per household of \$1,333. Administrative costs were less than 5% of total program expenses.

Public Service Activities

Council on Aging

During the pandemic, the Council on Aging (COA) moved toward a virtual format for many of its programs and services, including groups and programs that combat social isolation. The COA Technology Loan Library lent 53 Chromebooks purchased through CDBG-CV to seniors interested and able to participate in virtual programs from their homes, beginning in fall 2020. The program also paired each recipient up with a fellow older adult in Arlington, who gave them lessons and provided help with using the loaned device and participating in virtual programming. As of the final program reporting in 2021, 64 individuals had borrowed a Chromebook.

Arlington EATS

Arlington EATS supported food security in a respectful and compassionate manner throughout the pandemic. Through the CDBG-CV grant, Arlington EATS provided 1,707 individuals with weekly deliveries of nutritious and culturally appropriate food tailored to the preferences of each household. This program offered service to any Arlington resident in need through a home delivery to reduce exposure to Covid-19.

Food Link

During the pandemic, Food Link began operating a new model of food delivery to the residents Arlington Housing Authority properties, holding pop-up pantries 2 times per week and offering a home delivery one evening per week. An average of 30 households participated in the program each week and thousands of pounds of food were delivered. Food Link Volunteers also packed bags of groceries that were distributed to seniors. Food Link doubled its food rescue in 2020 and 2021 primarily due to the increase in demand and necessity posed by the pandemic, and by pivoting to finding and collecting food from new sources including institutional food donors. Overall, nearly 6,000 Arlington residents benefited from Food Link's services funded through CDBG-CV.

Arlington Boys & Girls Club

The Arlington Boys and Girls Club implemented a Board of Health-approved childcare program to support families needing to work in-person during the pandemic. Through both physical and procedural modifications, families were provided with free or reduced-cost childcare, and children were provided a safe place to learn and grow while taking part in a wide range of activities including the Remote Learning Program, Preschool Program, aquatics, and fitness programs. 73 children benefited from CDBG-CV funding through Arlington Boys and Girls Club's programming.

Arlington Department of Health and Human Services

The Arlington Department of Health and Human Services provided a Covid-19 test clinic at an Arlington Housing Authority site, enabling residents to monitor their health and continue going to work or bringing children to childcare during the public health crisis. 73 individuals who live at Arlington Housing Authority properties received testing through the CDBG-CV grant. The program was concluded earlier than anticipated due to the availability of other state and federal resources to provide testing services more broadly.

Arlington Public Schools

Arlington Public Schools is utilizing CDBG-CV to support students from households with low and moderate incomes who were at a greater disadvantage with the modified learning environment necessitated by the pandemic. The purpose of the tutoring program is to provide no-cost tutoring support to students who may have fallen behind, or further behind, during the initial school closure and remote learning period in spring 2020, and also during fall 2020. The CDBG-CV grant supported stipends for educators to facilitate the program. During school year 2020-2021, 67 students received academic support, and 55 students have received support during the 2021-2022 year thus far. This program is ongoing, and will end at the conclusion of the 2021-2022 school year in June 2022.

Arlington Small Business Covid-19 Relief Program (Microenterprise Grant Program)

The Arlington Small Business Covid-19 Relief Program provided grants of up to \$10,000 to offset the negative business impacts of the pandemic. The program was open to businesses with a brick and mortar location in Arlington, five or fewer employees, and a business owner earning at or below 80 percent of the area median income as determined by HUD. Business owners representing 25 businesses in Arlington were provided short-term working capital grants of \$10,000 to mitigate the severe economic interruption caused by the pandemic and to offset payroll costs, rent and mortgage payments, utilities, and loss of inventory due to mandatory closures. 24 of these businesses were able to stay afloat and have remained in business.

Arlington Covid-19 Business Resiliency Program

The Arlington Covid-19 Business Resiliency Program provided working capital support and technical assistance to small businesses with 20 or fewer employees. This program administered \$208,729.72 to 21 small businesses in Arlington and through two contracts to Technical Assistance consultants, who worked directly with business owners to enhance e-commerce, website functionality, and more. Grants ranged from \$7,833 to \$12,000 and provided working capital with the aims of supporting small business viability and retaining or creating jobs. Collectively, 16 full-time and 11 part-time (the latter equating to 5 full-time equivalent) jobs were either created or retained through the program so far. These efforts aim to reduce the number of poverty-level families by creating stable local job opportunities and supporting the vitality of Arlington's business districts. All 21 businesses remain open.

Conclusion

As Arlington residents and businesses recover from the negative health and economic impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Town will continue to identify opportunities to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the pandemic, as well as opportunities for growth and reinvention. Other funding sources, including appropriations from the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA), have already begun benefitting residents, with some programs continuing and expanding the efforts started through CDBG-CV programs.